



**Dr. Vince Bertram**  
Superintendent  
Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation

## Children must start school **ready to succeed.**

**46% of kindergarteners come to school at risk for failure.  
Parents and caregivers are the key to school readiness.**

The achievement gap begins well before kindergarten. Vulnerable children from at-risk families start kindergarten 1-2 years behind in language and other essential skills. We know when children come to kindergarten already behind, they rarely catch up. Early childhood programs give children the opportunity to develop the essential skills they need to succeed in school and in life.

By age 4, children in poverty will have heard 30 million fewer words than children living in professional families. By third grade, children from middle class families with well-educated parents average 12,000 words in their vocabulary. Children of less-educated parents with less financial means average only 4,000 words.



**Dr. Phyllis Bussing**  
Director of Schools  
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